

THE OTHER WITHIN:
PRISMATIC IDENTITIES AND AUTHENTIC SELVES WITHIN THE
MARGINALIZED

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ABSTRACT

This article's aims are three-fold: First, it attempts to problematize the current essentialist positions of identity formation, particularly that of the Other, within the social sciences. It attempts to explore how the identity of the Other is formulated through essentialist notions, as well as articulate how this formation of the Other is contextually situated. Secondly, the aim of this project is to offer an introductory analysis of the identity configuration which I refer to as the Other Within. This identity configuration refers to those positions of marginality within an already marginalized group. This analysis, therefore, is sociologically unique in that it attempts to articulate an epistemology of a subgroup within an already Othered category. Lastly, this article offers the concept of the *spectrum model* as an analytical tool within the sociological study of identity. The model of the spectrum gives the social sciences a method of practicing a more sensitive and inclusive form of identity research by recognizing the relational aspects of identity configurations within a given group, rather than creating epistemological ghettos of difference.